

## THE PIG'S PEN

"most of the animal kingdom," she says,  
observing the silkworm moths in the candy box,  
does nothing but eat and sleep and procreate."

and i think:

i consider myself firmly a part of the animal kingdom  
and have surely been described as such by ex-mates  
but the one difference is  
that i eat and sleep and procreate

and then i write about it.

## TWO GENERATIONS OF ITALIAN FRIENDS

i overhear the name of mario soldati  
and i begin to explain that period  
of late adolescence and early literacy  
when my best friend, vince prestianni,  
led me through the reading of the italian novelists,  
from manzoni through verga  
to pavese, vittorini, moravia, morante,  
bassani, calvino ... soldati.

"those were the days when we read the corpus,"  
gene dinielli says, and, as usual,  
he is as accurate, succinct and suggestive  
of hidden meanings as a sphinx in the quadrangle.

we did indeed in those days  
read not only everyone  
but everything by everyone.

very few students today seem to,  
but maybe there were very few of us who did that  
even then.

today, well, today i try to keep up,  
but i keep falling farther behind.

dinielli, however, still reads the corpus,  
and we both have children who may,  
and i'm sure that prestianni,  
surrounded by library books,  
and still a writer of notes more literate  
than a lot of what is accepted as literature --

i'm sure that vince still reads the corpus.